

The Essay

A 1,000-word or fewer narrative about how a grower and retailer pair work together to apply the 4Rs in a farming operation. Follow these suggestions to ensure your application is as complete as possible.

The Basics

The narrative should present:

- A basic description of the farm – number of acres, crops grown, unique environmental considerations, family involvement, etc.
- Describe the relationship between the retailer and the grower and how they have been able to work together in an effective manner.
- Explain why these nominees should be selected as 4R Advocates. Please feel free to use examples and speak about the nominees' qualifications both on and off the farm.
- Use your own words. This should be an honest portrayal of the operation, the grower's approach and a recognition of family members involved in the business. The story can be told from the grower's or retailer's perspective or in third person.

The Details of Applying The 4Rs

This is where you really tell the story of the operation within those 1,000 words. Dive into detail. Include the grower's description about how the 4Rs help achieve economic, social and environmental objectives. Also, explain the retail advisor's engagement and how they see value in the 4Rs.

- Present the 4R-related products, services and practices practiced on the farm. Tell how they've been applied and continue to be refined. Brand names are allowable.
- Include the retailer's descriptions of how the 4Rs strengthen their relationships with growers. Explain how you may plan better than before using a 4R system.
- List best management practices used.
- Describe any conservation practices that are being used to support on farm stewardship.

- Tell how 4R practices improve farm income.
- Describe how 4R practices help with economic, social and environmental goals.

Feel free to include yield maps or other examples that help paint a picture of how the 4Rs have played a role in the operation.

Show pictures. Include up to six photos with a short description of each photo.

If you have other activities that help make a good 4R Advocate, add them in 100-word or fewer additions. These may include radio interviews, community presentations, TV interviews, online videos or other activities.

The Proof

Here's where the rubber meets the road. Show metrics that quantify gains from using the 4Rs. For example:

- Show nutrient use efficiency (NUE) and yield/amount of fertilizer applied.
 - **Examples:** For corn, N use efficiency is as low as 0.83 lb/bu, a 17 percent improvement from 2015. 0.96 lb N/bu with a 234 bu/ac average corn yield. It has increased using split application going from 1.2 lbs of N/bu to 0.8 lbs of N/bu of corn
- Demonstrate cost savings
 - **Examples:** Compared to fall application in 2014 and 2015, savings range from \$20 to \$30/acre. Using variable-rate dry fertilizer saved \$15/ac in 2015 and \$20/ac in 2016.

Need examples? Look at how other advocates have quantified their improvements here: nutrientstewardship.org/advocates

Show average yield per acre for each crop and units (tons, bushels etc.). If yields have improved over the years, show data to support the claims. The more you can share, the better. However, don't let only a couple years' worth of data concern you. 4R practices have to begin somewhere.